



Claims Conference Holocaust Survivor Memoir Collection

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A Thimbleful of Light

By Lisa Saretzky

The Nazis had been in Vienna two months now: Everything bleak, dark, hopeless, wild fear in people's eyes. No one trusted anyone, a loaf of bread pressed under an armpit like a kidnapped baby.

As a 13 year old girl, there was only one tiny bit of sunshine for me each day: at two PM I sneaked into my synagogue through a tiny secret door in the back, up a snake staircase, winding its secret passage up to the tower and a small triangular space. Our rabbi was always there like a safe rock that all of us children could hold on to. We took turns reading prayers, he praised us lavishly, and there was always a sweet and a cookie to take home. We were 20 children originally, and each day someone was missing. We never mentioned it. It was too big, too painful, to talk about. There was a silent knowing.

One day, the rabbi said, "Children, this is our last day together, do not come anymore." He raised his long slender arms toward heaven, his satin white and silver shawl covering his head and shoulders, and blessed us all, "The lord is my Sheppard, I shall not want, if I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me..."

Eleh Ezkerah

These We Remember

*These I recall and pour my heart out.
How the arrogant have devoured us!*

It was the worst of days, but also the best of days... My father was at Vienna's Jewish Agency all night looking for my papers: 'Lisl Rubin Kindertransport to London'. The Nazis had come in, and thrown all the carefully arranged papers all over the room. He found mine at 5 am and came running home: 'Quick, Lisl goes.' He had sewn me a cloth pocket to wear next to my body, with all papers, passport, etc. He would not come to the train; men were 'schlepped' away on sight. My mother, my suitcase and I went to the Vienna train station. There was an ocean of humans everywhere – panic, fear, confusion in the air. All of a sudden, as a Nazi shouted into a bullhorn 'No talking or waving goodbye – or you'll be arrested', there was a deadly silence.

I remember looking out of the open train window, my arms by my side, looking at Mutti. She was so thin, so white, so shabby. I loved her so... Someone handed me a baby through the window. The baby didn't cry.

I wore my thin gold Magen David around my neck, hidden under my blouse. It was not allowed. It felt so loving on my skin. God was with us all, no matter what the outcome.

The train pulled out. No waving – not a sound, just like that...

Next: Holland! Dutch women ran aside the train and handed us milk and cakes – we grabbed hungrily and gratefully. Someone whispered: 'We are free now.' I could not believe it. My parents and all the other Jews were not free. I was connected to THEM ALL and not to freedom...

Lisl Saretzky

אליה אזכורה ונפשי עלי אשפכה
כי בלוונו זדים – כעוגה בלי הפוכה.

*These I recall and pour my heart out.
How the arrogant have devoured us!*

I was on the Kindertransport¹⁷
in '39 Vienna to London

called
Oct 16/00

PII Redacted

